

CZ-HUMAN RIGHTS

ANNUAL PROGRAMME REPORT 2023: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2023, a total of 61 projects were under implementation within all three programme areas - Roma Inclusion, Human Rights, and Domestic and Gender-based Violence - of the Human Rights Programme. Four projects ended in 2023, and most of the others will be implemented by the very end of the period of eligibility of expenditures in projects, i.e. April 2024. The programme has made significant progress towards its objective, outcomes and outputs. The values of some outcome and output indicators have even been exceeded mostly because they were underestimated at the time of programme preparation.

Thanks to the implementation of the programme, there was a gradual development of changes in all three areas and several positive developments at the level of legislation and systemic measures in the Czech Republic in 2023. The establishment of several Roma platforms, employment of Roma advisors at authorities, and organization of initiatives for the prevention of early school leaving of Roma children have contributed to the empowerment of Roma, their greater engagement at a local level, and the capacity building of Roma NGOs. Activities in areas of Human Rights, such as different research and awareness raising activities, a new web portal on human rights, and the introduction of a new position of a social court worker, confirm the relevance and importance of this area supported under the Human Rights Programme. Within the area of Domestic and Gender-based Violence, the capacity of the system for preventing and combatting domestic and gender-based violence has been strengthened thanks to the establishment of interdisciplinary platforms to provide complex assistance to victims, the establishment of centres for victims, awareness raising campaigns on different areas of violence, and programmes for perpetrators.

Bilateral cooperation between project promoters and their Norwegian partners within twelve projects has brought about the mutual exchange of experience. As a project example might serve the pre-defined project *Strengthening the Public Defender of Rights' activities in human rights protection (Towards establishing an NHRI in the Czech Republic)* (LP-PDP3-001, CZ-HUMANRIGHTS-0003). On 18 September, 2023, the Office of the Public Defender of Rights, together with the Norwegian partner the Norwegian National Human Rights Institution (NHRI), organized a roundtable. Different stakeholders, such as representatives of NHRIs from Norway, Slovakia, Estonia, and Slovenia, debated the currently prepared amendment to the Public Defender of Rights Act. It assumes that the ombudsman in the Czech Republic will exercise the mandate of the NHRI.

The programme implementation in 2023 brought several valuable lessons for the Programme Operator as well as for the project promoters. In connection with the advanced phase of the implementation of the programme, some programme risks identified at the beginning have become irrelevant. Based on feedback from project promoters from the implementation of their projects, it was confirmed that the programme is valuable and needed.